

Message Text

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17

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 663

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

COMIDEASTFOR

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

S E C R E T MUSCAT 825

NOFORN

KUWAIT PASS DOHA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MOPS, MU

SUBJECT: MILITARY OPERATIONS IN DHOFAR

REF: MUSCAT 805

1. OMAN'S FALL OFFENSIVE IN DHOFAR BEGAN AT DAWN DEC. 2.
THIS NEWS HIGHLIGHTED BRIEFING CONDUCTED EVENING DEC. 1 BY
SAF COMMANDER MAJGEN CREASEY FOR VISITING AMBASSADOR HELMS
AND PARTY OF EMBASSY AND MAAG OFFICERS FROM TEHRAN. MAIN
IMMEDIATE FEATURE OF OFFENSIVE IS ADVANCE FROM MANSTON

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(AKA NAJD HADAWBAH) SOUTHWARD INTO JABAL AREA IN WESTERN DHOFAR

BY ELEMENTS OF IRANIAN BRIGADE FLOWN SINCE MID-NOVEMBER FROM IRAN TO MANSTON'S NEWLY-PREPARED CONCRETE AIRSTRIP AND HEAD-QUARTERS FACILITIES. GUT OBJECTIVE OF OFFENSIVE IS TO DEFEAT REMAINING HARD-CORE GUERRILLA FORCES IN JABAL AREA OF DHOFAR BETWEEN HORNBEAM LINE AND PDRY BORDER, AND TO CAPTURE OR DESTROY THEIR STOCKPILES OF WEAPONS, AMMO AND FOOD STORED IN CAVES AND STRONGPOINTS SCATTERED THROUGH RUGGED TERRAIN OF THIS REGION.

2. GEN. CREASEY, PRESIDING IN HIS USUAL EFFECTIVE MANNER, EMPHASIZED THAT WAR WELL ON WAY TO BEING WON. HE WENT OVER MUCH OF SAME GROUND REPORTED IN SEVERAL MESSAGES THIS SUMMER AND FALL (MUSCAT A-39, A-46; KUWAIT 4086; MUSCAT 615 AND 681, MAINLY NOTAL). HE STRESSED STEADY FAVORABLE TRENDS SINCE 1972; VITAL IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES WHICH INDEED ARE EXPANDING IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL DHOFAR; IRANIAN RESPONSIVENESS WHICH IS HELPING OMAN GOVT KEEP UP PRESSURE ON THE ENEMY; AND THE QUANTUM IMPROVEMENTS IN SAF ORGANIZATIONAL AND LOGISTIC CAPABILITIES THIS YEAR MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY OMAN'S GREATLY INCREASED OIL REVENUES. MOST INTERESTING SPECIFIC NEW POINTS FOLLOW.

3. NUMBER OF ENEMY DEFECTORS CONTINUES TO MOUNT. MONTH OF NOVEMBER BROUGHT RECORD NUMBER OF 40 SWELLING TOTAL SINCE WAR BEGAN TO OVER ONE THOUSAND. (EARLIER MESSAGES HAVE DESCRIBED HOW MOST OF THESE ARE DE-BRIEFED, REWARDED AND WITH GREAT SUCCESS TURNED INTO PRO-GOVERNMENT FIRQA (HOME GUARD) FORCES TO ADVANCE GOVERNMENT CAUSE IN THEIR HOME TRIBAL AREAS.)

4. MOST SUCCESSFUL BREACHING OF STATIC HORNBEAM LINE TOOK PLACE IN NOVEMBER, WITH GROUP OF ABOUT 80 GUERRILLAS WITH PACK-CAMELS GETTING THROUGH NORTHERN PART OF LINE FROM WEST TO EAST. HOWEVER, DOZEN OR SO OF THESE INCOMERS ALREADY HAVE DEFECTED TO OMANI SIDE, AND SAF DOES NOT CONSIDER BREACH TO BE A MAJOR SETBACK.

5. IMPORTANT PLUS-FACTOR FOR SAF MORALE IS RAPID OMANI AIR-EVAC CAPABILITY AFFORDED BY EXPANDING HELICOPTER FLEET AND BACKED UP BY PRESENCE IN SALALAH ALTERNATELY OF ROYAL ARMY OR
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AIR FORCE EMERGENCY SURGICAL UNIT.

6. RESPONDING TO QUESTION ABOUT CAPABILITY SHOWN BY IRANIAN MILITARY UNITS AND INDIVIDUALS, CREASEY MADE FOL COMMENTS, WHICH SHOULD BE CLOSELY HELD. IRANIANS ARE INDIVIDUALLY TOUGH AND IN GOOD SHAPE, COME WELL-EQUIPPED WITH GEAR, AND HAVE SHOWN BRAVERY. MAIN CRITICISM WOULD BE THAT THEY ARE OVERLY RIGID AND HAVE NOT SHOWN ENOUGH INITIATIVE

OR RESOURCEFULNESS. ON THE WHOLE THEIR JUNIOR OFFICERS AND NONCOMS SEEM RELATIVELY MORE IMPRESSIVE, WITH MORE SENIOR OFFICERS SHOWING INDECISIVENESS ALMOST AS IF THEY PREFERRED TO DO NOTHING RATHER THAN TO RISK MAKING A MISTAKE. CREASEY PERSONALLY FEELS THAT IN AIDING OMAN, SHAH IS MOTIVATED PERHAPS AS MUCH BY DESIRE TO SEE WHAT STUFF HIS TROOPS ARE MADE OF AS BY CONVICTION THAT OMANI EFFORT TO COUNTER COMMUNIST-FED INSURRECTION IN THIS REGION DESERVES IRANIAN ASSISTANCE. HE PARTICULARLY COMMENDED FULL COOPERATION FROM GEN. AZHARI.

7. COMMENT. JUST HOW SOON EARLY RESULTS OF PRESENT OFFENSIVE WILL BE AVAILABLE IS HARD TO SAY. OMANIS HAVE OF COURSE NOT PUBLICIZED ATTACK, NOR THE FACT OF ARRIVAL OF NEW IRANIAN BRIGADE.
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